

## UNSW Medicine & Health Professionalism Student Code of Conduct: Principles

### Introduction

The UNSW Medicine & Health Professionalism Student Code of Conduct establishes the foundation for ethical, responsible, and culturally safe practice for professionals in health. This code reflects the Faculty's commitment to the highest standards of professional behaviour and aligns with UNSW's broader mission of social responsibility - promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion while serving the community.

As future professionals in health, UNSW Medicine & Health students have significant responsibilities toward individuals, families, communities, and the healthcare system. This code serves as both a guide and a commitment - outlining the principles and behaviours expected throughout your educational journey and professional career.

The values articulated in this code - integrity, respect, cultural safety, anti-racism, ethical practice, wellbeing, reflective learning, leadership, effective communication, and evidence-based practice - represent our collective pledge to excellence in healthcare. These principles transcend the classroom and clinical settings, extending to all aspects of professional and personal conduct.

By embracing this code, you join a community dedicated to advancing health equity, challenging systemic barriers, and providing compassionate, person-centred care. This commitment supports the Faculty's vision of promoting the health of individuals and communities through world-class education, research and clinical excellence, while fostering environments free from discrimination, racism and harassment.

As you progress through your studies and future career, this code will serve as an enduring framework for professional growth, wellbeing, ethical decision-making, and advocacy for positive change in healthcare and society.

### Definitions

**Professionalism:** A set of values, behaviours and relationships that underpins the trust that society has in healthcare and public health professionals. Professionalism, when reciprocated by the trust of the individual or community under care, forms the basis of every professional relationship. Professional behaviour includes demonstrating cultural sensitivity and anti-racism. Professionalism is also necessary to effectively participate in collaborative relationships required to provide team-based healthcare.

**Profession:** An occupation in which the specialised knowledge and practice of a discipline is used in the service of others. Its members are governed by a code of ethics and their professional identity includes a commitment to competence, integrity and morality, altruism and the promotion of the public good within their domain. These commitments form the basis of a social contract between a profession and society. Professions and their members are expected to have high personal *standards of behaviour* and are accountable to those they serve, to their profession and to society.

Definitions taken from:

Cruess SR & Cruess RL. (2012). Teaching professionalism – Why, What and How, *Facts Views Vis, Obgyn.*, 4(4): 259–265 and [CANMEDS 7. Professional | PROFILES](#)

## Purpose of this Code of Conduct

The purpose of the UNSW Medicine & Health Professionalism Student Code of Conduct ('Code') is to describe the standards of behaviour and conduct expected from all healthcare professional and public health students in the Faculty. The Code applies in all settings, including on campus, undertaking placements or course-related activities at health care services, industry or in the community.

As aspiring professionals in health, students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism, ensuring they provide safe, ethical, and culturally responsive care to individuals and communities.

The Faculty of Medicine & Health expects its graduates to demonstrate high standards of professionalism. At the end of their program, students will demonstrate knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to at least the standard required by both the university and regulatory bodies. This requires gradual progression in knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours from novice to competent practitioner.

All students in Medicine & Health programs are expected to be aware of, comply with and demonstrate, standards of professionalism outlined in the Code appropriate to their stage of learning.

Where relevant, this Code operates in conjunction with the [UNSW Student Code of Conduct](#), the [UNSW Anti-Racism Policy](#), Faculty guidelines and other relevant UNSW policies and procedures.

The obligations outlined in this Code do not replace, limit, or modify obligations applicable by law.

The following principles outline the core values and behaviours required of students across all disciplines in the Faculty of Medicine & Health:

### 1. Professional Conduct

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Maintain professional behaviour, demonstrating integrity, self-awareness, empathy, inclusivity and respect in all interactions with students, staff, individuals seeking healthcare, their families, carers, interprofessional teams and diverse communities, with a commitment to health equity.
- Actively contribute to fostering safe and inclusive environments free from racism, discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.
- Uphold the values and standards of professional conduct in all aspects of life, including social settings. This includes the use of social media, public interactions, and at social events—whether affiliated with UNSW or not.
- Acknowledge the level of my skills, experience and knowledge, and not represent myself as more competent or qualified than I am. I will correct any such misunderstandings that arise.
- Not give advice or provide information beyond my level of knowledge and expertise to patients, family members or the public. If asked for such commentary, I will direct that person to an appropriate professional.

### 2. Inclusive Practice, Cultural Safety and Anti-Racism

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Acknowledge the social, economic, cultural, historic and behavioural factors influencing health, both at individual and population levels.

- Advocate for systemic change to promote inclusivity and eliminate racism and other forms of discrimination across all facets of healthcare and education.
- Understanding that my own culture and beliefs influence my interactions with others, reflect on and address personal biases, privilege and power dynamics that may influence professional practice.
- Engage in ongoing education to understand and combat the social, cultural, and economic determinants of racism and other forms of discrimination within healthcare.
- Acknowledge and address the impacts of colonisation, systemic racism, and structural inequities on health outcomes.
- Commit to anti-racist principles by identifying, challenging, and dismantling discriminatory practices and beliefs within systems and professional interactions.
- Value and incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ways of knowing, being, and doing into professional practice.
- Demonstrate respect and sensitivity towards the cultural needs and backgrounds of the communities I serve, including those of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australians and those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.

### **3. Ethical and Legal Responsibilities**

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Practice with integrity, honesty, and fairness, abiding by professional codes, legislative frameworks, and ethical standards.<sup>1</sup>
- Adhere to privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, and safe and effective documentation standards.
- Recognise and act upon conflicts of interest, duty of care, and mandatory reporting obligations.
- In research practice, adhere to all the ethical principles in the appropriate guidelines and only conduct research in accordance with approval obtained from the appropriate research ethics committee.<sup>2</sup>

### **4. Personal Health, Resilience and Wellbeing**

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Demonstrate self-awareness and actively manage personal health and wellbeing to ensure optimal delivery of healthcare and collaboration.
- Employ self-care strategies to maintain wellbeing and optimise resilience in challenging environments.
- Have my own General Practitioner and seek timely independent, objective advice from an appropriate trusted health professional for my own wellbeing and healthcare needs.

## 5. Reflective Practice

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Identify professional limitations and seek advice or refer when needed to prioritise patient care and safety over learning opportunities.
- Engage in lifelong learning, critically evaluate personal performance, ensure that my skills and knowledge are current and proactively seek and utilise feedback to enhance professional growth.

## 6. Leadership and Advocacy

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Lead by example, fostering inclusive, ethical, and supportive environments in professional and educational settings.
- Advocate for equitable access to health care and public health programs and collaborate with a range of health professions to improve societal well-being.

## 7. Effective Communication and Collaboration

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Communicate clearly, respectfully, and empathetically with individuals, families, carers, interprofessional teams and communities.
- Utilise appropriate communication strategies for both in-person and digital health interactions, considering confidentiality, accessibility, language preferences and literacy levels (including health literacy), including working with interpreters where appropriate.

## 8. Safe and Evidence-Based Practice

*As a student in Medicine & Health, I will:*

- Adhere to safe practices, including time management, risk assessment, and effective use of technology.
- Commit to evidence-based decision-making and interventions, ensuring actions are culturally responsive and within the scope of practice and competence.

By upholding these principles, students contribute to the trust, respect, and excellence essential to all health professions, ensuring the best possible outcomes for individuals and communities.

Non-compliance with this Code of Conduct may have consequences ranging from reflective tasks for lapses in professional behaviour up to exclusion from your program for serious breaches of the Code (N.B. [Complaints Management and Investigation Policy and Procedure](#)).

This Code will be reviewed annually and revised as appropriate.

<sup>1</sup> The Faculty of Medicine & Health's student professionalism requirements correspond with the professional characteristics that are more extensively outlined in:

- (a) the [National Boards](#);
- (b) the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency \(Ahpra\)](#);
- (c) the [National Alliance of Self-Regulating Health Professions \(NASRHP\)](#);
- (d) the [Health Practitioner Regulation National Law \(NSW\) 2009](#); and
- (e) [Schedule 3 of the Public Health Regulation 2012](#).

For graduates entering health professions not included within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, these requirements correspond to the [Code of Conduct for Unregistered Health Professionals](#).

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the [NHMRC statements on Ethical conduct in human research](#) and [NHMRC statement on ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities](#).